

The “Museum of Communist Terror”: Institute of historical falsification planned for London

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12 March 2019

A network of extreme Brexiteer Tories and right-wing media figures plan to establish a “Museum of Communist Terror” in London.

This would be the first such project outside of a former Stalinist state, marking a major right-wing offensive in British politics. Its proponents hope to bury the popular appeal of socialism under a mountain of lies, to legitimate the far right and provide a spur to a devastating programme of social counterrevolution.

According to the organisation’s website, “The Museum of Communist Terror aims to keep alive knowledge and understanding of the deaths, terror and economic failure that took place under Communist regimes.

“The strategy is to do this through social media, this website, talks and films for schools and universities, lobbying for improvements in the teaching of the history of Communist regimes, events and the creation of one or more small museums leading up to the development of a full-size museum in London.”

The museum’s website has produced several “infographics” aimed at associating socialism and communism with untold death and destruction, including the statements, “Deaths in WWI: 15-18 million. Deaths in WWII: 40-85 million. Deaths under Communism: 80-100 million.” Also, “Tolstoy and Chekhov helped alleviate the Russian famine in 1891-1892. Lenin shocked even his own family by refusing to do the same. He thought famine would encourage a revolution.”

This tally of deaths due to “communism,” which is invariably contrasted unfavourably with those resulting from fascism, is arrived at by blaming the Bolshevik party for the deaths on all sides during the civil war and wars of imperialist intervention of 1918-21, the forced collectivisation and the Great Terror under Stalin in the Soviet Union, deaths during the rule of Mao in China and Pol Pot in Cambodia, and whatever nationalist movements that claimed adherence to Marxism in order to secure popular support as anti-imperialist and backing from Moscow throughout the 20th century. All deaths in all conflicts are attributed to “communism” because the pro-imperialists are the designated “good guys.”

The fundamental lie propagated by the museum is that Stalinism—in the Soviet Union and other states like China—was the true expression of Marxism. According to this immense historical falsification, the crimes of Stalin or Mao are therefore the crimes of communism.

The truth is the opposite. Stalinism was a counterrevolutionary tendency aimed at the physical obliteration of the communist movement and its leading representatives in a campaign of political genocide. Its first victims were the flower of the October 1917 Russian Revolution with Leon Trotsky, co-leader of the revolution alongside Lenin, foremost among them.

The genuine Marxists, brought together in the Trotskyist movement, were the most implacable opponents of Stalinism. In August 1940, Trotsky, who was living in exile in Mexico City, was assassinated by a Stalinist agent.

With capitalism discredited in the eyes of vast masses of people and sympathy for socialism growing rapidly, those seeking to establish the museum are determined to prevent this sentiment finding a revolutionary expression in the ideas of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky.

The Marxist movement has close historical connections to London. Those associated with the museum are seeking to drag the movement through the mud with Marx recast as the original mastermind of mass murder. As James Bartholomew, the journalist who writes for the hard-Brexit-supporting pro-Conservative *Telegraph* newspaper and *Spectator* magazine and who is a driving force behind the London museum project, has written, “Much of [Marx’s] works were, of course, written in London and it would be fitting if history’s judgment on him were properly acknowledged within a museum in our capital.”

It is revealing how closely the museum’s slanders match the slogans daubed on Marx’s grave in Highgate Cemetery by fascist vandals last month—“Memorial to Bolshevik Holocaust. 1917-1953. 66,000,000 dead, Architect of Genocide, terror and oppression, mass murder.” The museum lends an “official” justification to these sorts of attacks, branding socialists/communists as dangerous maniacs who need to be suppressed at all costs. In doing so, it gives succour to the far and fascistic right.

This is precisely the agenda of the “House of Terror,” which already exists in Hungary and the “Red Terror Museum” planned for Estonia.

The Hungarian museum was established in 2002, during the first term of the far-right Fidesz Party leader, Viktor Orban. It has been criticised for devoting vastly more space to “crimes of communism,” i.e., Stalinism, than to those of fascism and for

whitewashing the role of Hungarian elites in these crimes. Its director, Maria Schmidt, is closely tied to Fidesz.

Bartholomew was apparently inspired by a visit to the “House of Terror.” Another inspiration was the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation, founded by the American warmonger Zbigniew Brzezinski in 1993. The foundation awarded Orbán the Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom in 2002. Past recipients of the medal include the fanatical Cold Warrior Richard Pipes and the National Endowment for Democracy, the CIA front.

In 2018, the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation received a \$10 million donation from the Polish government of the Law and Justice party (PiS). PiS is a viciously anti-socialist and anti-democratic organisation which has worked continually to excuse the complicity of Polish nationalists in the Nazi murder of the Jews.

The same has been done by the governments of the Baltic countries. The “Red Terror Museum” planned for Estonia, organised by the Ministry of Justice, will play a crucial role in this campaign to demonise socialism.

These are not historical institutions, but centres of state propaganda. The two main voices for a similar museum in Britain, Bartholomew and Conservative speechwriter Tim Montgomerie, want to force down people’s throats the lie that Stalinism represented communism and that left-wing politics, not fascism or imperialism, is the greatest threat to human civilisation.

Writing in the *Spectator* in 2016, in an article titled “Britain needs a museum of communist terror,” Bartholomew claimed, “[A]cross the world, the biggest man-made disaster of the 20th century was the terror and death inflicted by communist regimes.”

Montgomerie echoed the call in 2018 in the *Times* of London with the demand, “We need a museum to remind us of communism’s evils.” Most significantly, he warned, “Communism’s seductive promises of a more equal world don’t only help explain why it escapes fascism’s taboo status but why it may be even more dangerous.”

Montgomerie, et al, want to combat the attraction of a world based upon equality by burying Marxism beneath a mountain of slanders. Hence the need for what Bartholomew called in the *Telegraph*, a “showcase documenting the terror of communist rule.”

Historical falsifications and the blackguarding of socialism are a necessary preparation for a new assault on the working class—and the development of fascistic mobs to enforce it. Besides James Bartholomew, the museum’s directors include Daniel Hannan, Chloe Westley, Eamonn Butler and Jean-Paul Floru. All are deeply involved in schemes for a hard Brexit and subsequent “shock therapy” of the UK economy, including sweeping deregulation and privatisation.

Bartholomew is the author of *The Welfare of Nations*, which argues that social welfare harms prosperity. Butler and Floru are senior figures in the Adam Smith Institute. Westley is a campaign manager for the right-wing TaxPayers’ Alliance lobby group and was head of social media for the Vote Leave campaign.

Conservative MP Hannan was a founder of Vote Leave and has since founded the Institute of Free Trade (IFT) to plan Britain’s post-Brexit economy. This organisation was largely responsible

for drafting “Plan A+”, endorsed by hard Brexiteers Boris Johnson, David Davis, Jacob Rees-Mogg and Steve Baker. The plan calls for the scrapping of labour, environmental, food standards and data privacy protections; the removal of already extremely limited controls on banking and financial services; and the privatisation of most government-funded services, particularly the National Health Service.

The political agenda of this group was summarised at a recent fundraising dinner for the Museum of Communist Terror by Conservative Chief Secretary to the Treasury Liz Truss. Accusing Theresa May’s austerity government of being too far to the left, she complained, “We have lost our moral certainty about the evils of communism and co-opted some of the language of the Left.”

Britain’s exit from the European Union should be used “to cut taxes, reduce red tape and move away from the big-state European model.”

Leaving no doubt that this programme would be forced on the population, she continued, “You can’t fight communism just by saying it doesn’t work. We need to be prepared to ignore policies that are popular in the current climate but don’t sit with our political values—and instead seek to change the political weather.”

Only this could beat back the “monster of the hard left,” she said. The *Mail on Sunday* noted that Truss “claimed ‘the Right’ had been ‘asleep at the wheel in the battle of ideas’ since the end of the [1979-1991] Thatcher government.”

Like US President Donald Trump and his Republican allies, a section of the British ruling class is unnerved by the international resurgence of working-class struggle and determined to crush it. They are desperate to prevent the British and international working class from connecting with its revolutionary socialist traditions, represented today by the International Committee of the Fourth International.



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